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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its thirtieth session

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on 6-8 October and 8 December 1997

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INTRODUCTION

1. The thirtieth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 6 to 8 October and 8 December 1997. In the course of the session, the Working Party held 4 plenary meetings - the 120th to 123rd meetings. All other meetings were informal and held in private.

Opening statements

2. The **Chairman** said that technical cooperation was a very important aspect of UNCTAD's work that was receiving increased attention from the intergovernmental machinery in the post-Midrand period. At its fifteenth executive session, in June 1997, the Trade and Development Board had adopted a technical cooperation strategy (TD/B/EX(14)/3), according to which UNCTAD's technical cooperation was to be demand-driven and was to enhance the institutional capacities of developing countries and help ensure their participation in the world economy. The strategy also addressed the question of the resource constraints affecting the implementation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities. Under the strategy, the Working Party was to review the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and to provide guidance to the Board in that respect.

3. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** said that the role of the Working Party in the operation of UNCTAD had increased in importance. Previously, it had provided a forum for the exchange of information, whereas now it was becoming increasingly involved in the formulation and implementation of the programme budget. The Working Party's discussions on technical cooperation were extremely important, since UNCTAD IX had called for the increasing integration of UNCTAD's technical cooperation work with its regular budget activities. That would give rise to a number of issues, including the orientation of technical cooperation activities. Finally, the secretariat would be providing the Working Party with data on the planned use of work months for the biennium 1998-1999, and it hoped for feedback from the Working Party in that connection.

Chapter I

REVIEW OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF UNCTAD AND THEIR FINANCING

(Agenda item 3)

A. Consideration of agenda item 3 at the first part of the session

4. For its consideration of this item at the first part of its session, the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

"An overview of technical cooperation activities" (TD/B/44/11);

"Review of activities undertaken in 1996" (TD/B/44/11/Add.1);

"Statistical tables" (TD/B/44/11/Add.2).

5. The **Chief, Inter-organizational Affairs and Technical Cooperation**, said that, in dollar terms, technical cooperation activities had reached their highest level ever in 1996, and a further increase of about 10 per cent was expected in 1997. Bilateral funding and trust-fund contributions had increased, and the previous decline in UNDP funding had been reversed. At the same time, however, the resources available remained modest in relation to multilateral technical cooperation needs, and funds were still lacking for certain specific areas of technical cooperation. The distribution of expenditure in 1996 reflected requests received for technical cooperation and the funding available, and it was not the outcome of any judgement on the part of the secretariat concerning the destination of funding. The balance of activities in 1996 had remained relatively unchanged in relation to the previous year. However, the technical cooperation strategy approved by the Board provided for priority to be given to the LDCs, and there had indeed been an increase in activities in LDCs, an increase that was expected to continue in 1997 and 1998.

6. With regard to future developments, the task ahead was to implement the strategy approved by the Board. On the question of cost recovery, the proposal before the Working Party (TD/B/44/11, Sect. 4), whereby software users could be requested to finance a part of the software development costs and all users could be requested to make a modest contribution to maintenance costs, was based on a feasibility study and on the secretariat's own experience. If put into effect, the proposal would represent not a new departure but a strengthening of existing practice.

7. The spokesperson for the **Asian Group** (Sri Lanka) noted a number of encouraging developments relating to the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD since 1995, one of them being the increase in expenditure, the second the likely reversal in the declining share of expenditure originating with UNDP, and the third the rise in the least developed countries' share of total expenditure.

8. His Group was greatly concerned at the continuous decline in the share of expenditure in the Asia and Pacific region, and if this represented a trend, it must be stopped very soon. His Group expected expenditure on technical cooperation activities in the Asian region to increase in relative terms, as envisaged under the technical cooperation strategy adopted in June 1997.

9. His Group appreciated UNDP's confidence in UNCTAD's comparative advantage in dealing with trade-related technical cooperation, as apparent in the increase in UNDP funding, and thanked the Governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their significant contributions to the Trust Fund in 1996, as well as the European Commission for its support for UNCTAD programmes. He appealed to all donors to help in promoting coherence in UNCTAD's operational activities, in accordance with paragraph 19 of document TD/B/44/11.

10. He expressed concern as to the prospects for the future sustainability of project-specific Trust Fund activities and the scope for broadening and diversifying support in line with the needs of LDCs and other low-income countries. The Asian Group took note of the focus of technical cooperation activities and of the success of the ASYCUDA Programme. The technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD should be expanded, particularly in the context of new and emerging issues. He finally noted with appreciation the increasing cooperation on operational activities with other international organizations, particularly ITC and WTO. UNCTAD should explore ways and means of further improving its partnership with WIPO.

11. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Mexico) said that UNCTAD's technical cooperation programme was an important element in helping countries to reap the benefits of globalization and liberalization. With regard to technical cooperation activities in 1996, he took note of the increase in expenditures in 1996 and the expected further increase in 1997. He also noted the expected increase in UNDP funding, which if confirmed would end the long-term decline in such funding. With regard to the distribution of expenditures, the share of LDCs had increased, but the decrease of expenditures in his region by 21 per cent was a matter for concern. In terms of the breakdown of expenditure by major item, he noted that no details had been given on subcontracting and miscellaneous expenditures and that expenditure on project staff seemed disproportionately high; more balance was needed between the three main components of technical cooperation expenditure.

12. His Group considered that the principle of the non-conditionality of technical cooperation contributions was important, since priorities for technical cooperation activities must be set by the beneficiary countries rather than by donors. The technical cooperation priorities set at UNCTAD IX and in UNCTAD's technical cooperation strategy must be recognized, and intergovernmental supervision of technical cooperation should be more effective. With regard to cost recovery and the financial sustainability of projects, the secretariat's proposals in that connection required clarification, and their financial viability should be analysed. No detailed explanation of existing practices or evaluation of their impact on cost recovery had been provided, and before any decision was taken, it would be important to examine the legal, financial and administrative issues involved.

13. With regard to technical cooperation management, there was no reference in the secretariat's report to the real costs of project implementation for the secretariat. Concerning future trends, UNCTAD's technical cooperation programme was achieving its goals satisfactorily, and its efforts to cooperate with other organizations were worthy of praise, but two policy questions would have to be addressed: how did the UNCTAD secretariat resolve the apparent contradiction between the concentration of technical cooperation activities in LDCs and its proposals for cost recovery, and how could regular budget expenditures be decreased and technical cooperation activities increased without the implementation of other mandates established at UNCTAD IX being affected?

14. The spokesperson for the **African Group** (Morocco) noted with satisfaction the increase in resources allocated to technical cooperation activities. He also underlined the favourable evolution of resources going to the least developed countries and Africa. With respect to project distribution in Africa, he noted that there were more regional projects than national projects, and he requested clarification on the reasons for that.

15. His Group was concerned that increased reliance on trust fund contributions to finance UNCTAD's technical cooperation might result in donor-driven priorities. One way of encouraging requests for technical cooperation from African countries would be to revert to the practice of informing member States of technical cooperation projects through the dissemination of a technical cooperation manual. He praised the increased cooperation with other international organizations in the field of trade and development, in particular with respect to the integrated programme for Africa, and said his Group was looking forward to an early evaluation of this programme. He underlined his Group's interest in the EMPRETEC project and requested its extension to Africa. With regard to cost recovery, the secretariat's proposal required more thought in view of its novelty. Finally, he congratulated the secretariat on its implementation of activities in favour of the Palestinian people.

Informal meetings

16. The Working Party pursued its consideration of agenda items 3 and 4 in private informal meetings.

Action by the Working Party at the first part of its session

17. At its closing (121st) plenary meeting, on 8 October 1997, the Working Party adopted agreed conclusions. (For the text of the agreed conclusions, see annex I.)

Closing statement

18. The **Chief, Inter-organizational Affairs and Technical Cooperation**, said that, with reference to paragraph 14 of the draft decision for the Board (see annex I), it was the secretariat's understanding that the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000 would be based on the present plan, which the Board had taken note of at its fifteenth executive session in March 1997. The updated plan would be made available to member States prior to the Working Party's session in December, though it would not be possible to respect the usual deadlines for the distribution of pre-session documentation. Much of the information would take the form of working sheets and lists of projects and would be made available in English. A short introduction to the plan would be made available in all official languages.

B. Consideration of agenda item 3 at the second part of the session

19. For the consideration of agenda item 3 at the second part of its session, the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

"1998-2000 plan for technical cooperation: note by the UNCTAD secretariat" (TD/B/WP/104).

Informal meetings

20. The Working Party pursued its consideration of agenda item 3 in private informal meetings.

Action by the Working Party at the second part of its session

21. At the closing plenary meeting of the second part of its session (123rd plenary meeting), on 8 December 1997, the Working Party adopted agreed conclusions. (For the text of the agreed conclusions, see annex II.) It further agreed to annex to its report the Chairman's summary of its informal discussions on the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan. (For the text of the summary, see annex III.)

Chapter II

EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMMES

(Agenda item 4)

22. For its consideration of agenda item 4,[1/] the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

"Evaluation report on the TRAINFORTRADE programme - prepared by Jean-Emile Denis" (TD/B/WP/103).

23. **Professor Jean-Emile Denis**, presenting his report on the evaluation of the TRAINFORTRADE programme, said that, while the time allowed for the study had been relatively short, he felt that all the elements necessary for the evaluation had been gathered together. The programme had shown remarkable dynamism since its inception, and its new formula had attracted the interest of both donors and recipients. At the same time, the results of the programme had been mixed. Its contribution to the training capacity of recipient countries had been modest, its sustainability had never been assured, and at times donors' interest in the programme had waned.

24. TRAINFORTRADE was based on a solid concept, it responded to real needs and it could make use of the considerable expertise that existed within UNCTAD in respect of technical cooperation. The causes of the programme's difficulties were easily identifiable, and corrective actions should be taken. There were three main elements that had led to these difficulties. The first concerned the positioning of the programme within the secretariat, and UNCTAD should now find a proper internal arrangement so as to allow the programme to make full use of the expertise that existed within UNCTAD in the field of training. The second element concerned resources. There had been a lack of resources for the programme's central team, and UNCTAD must ensure that at least a minimum number of regular-budget staff be assigned to the programme. The third element concerned the scope of the programme, which was too ambitious. Training trainers in the context of long-term capacity building required a high level of activity. Given the limited resources at the disposal of the programme, efficiency and effectiveness would never be achieved unless the programme reduced the number of its activities. In this context, the plans to create regional centres of excellence must be substantially reduced in scope. All these measures could be implemented without much difficulty, and he was convinced that UNCTAD had all the elements at its disposal for TRAINFORTRADE to be able to achieve the success originally envisaged.

25. The **representative of the UNCTAD secretariat** said that the secretariat had engaged an independent evaluator to make the evaluation as credible as possible. He felt that the report was fair, though he would have preferred to have had a more analytical approach and for the evaluator to have undertaken consultations with as many missions in Geneva as possible. The report adequately highlighted the key positive features of the programme, namely its visionary concept, its comparative advantage, the quality of its training packages, the quality and effectiveness of its methodology, and the cooperation established with other

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[1/] Agenda item 4 was considered at the second part of the Working Party's session, on 8 December 1997.

institutions, in particular ITC. At the same time, there were a number of shortcomings identified in the report which deserved full attention. First, the sustainability of projects, which was a common problem with technical cooperation projects in general, was a matter of concern, and ways to improve sustainability were looked at, including through a stronger commitment at the national level after project completion. Secondly, while the report appeared to lack some precision on the issue of the selection of national institutions, it should be recognized that the programme was indeed not sustainable in a number of regions such as the Caribbean or Central America. In this regard, it would not be possible to set up a viable network of TRAINFORTRADE centres as long as the programme could not offer training programmes ending with a diploma that was recognized worldwide. Thirdly, he felt that significant progress had already been made in terms of the cooperation between UNCTAD and ITC, as seen in Romania, though there was always scope for improvement. Fourthly, while the idea of centres of excellence had been well received by established institutions with which it had been discussed, in particular given the development of distance learning, it was also true that the links between these centres and the programme were not ideal due to lack of resources. The preparations for the 1998 Partners for Development meeting in Lyon might make it possible to invest more resources in solutions to this problem.

26. On the question of resources and management, he drew attention to the measures already taken by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to strengthen the TRAINFORTRADE programme. The programme could now benefit fully from synergies with other programmes in the Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency, and it had also received additional resources. In addition, there were now enhanced arrangements for the Division on Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities to make systematic substantive contributions to the programme in key areas of international trade diplomacy and policy. The measures taken by the Secretary-General therefore placed both the operation and the management of the programme on a more solid basis.

27. The representative of **Morocco** said he appreciated the report and the methods employed in its preparation, including the use of an independent consultant, though consultations with a wider range of both donors and beneficiaries would have provided a more concrete picture. He stressed the importance of follow-up at the national level, which was crucial to the success of the TRAINFORTRADE programme. Concerning the internal management of the programme, there must be close coordination between the programme and the other substantive divisions of UNCTAD to enable the latter to make the appropriate inputs. Resources should be commensurate with needs, and the linkages with other UNCTAD training programmes should be improved for a more harmonized human resources development programme. Cooperation with other institutions was important, in particular with ITC, and the issue of cooperation with WTO should have been explicitly considered in the report as well.

28. The representative of the **United States of America** said that the report was timely and balanced. She attached particular importance to three issues raised by the report, namely UNCTAD's comparative advantage, the need for cooperation in order to avoid duplication, and the need for more systematic monitoring and evaluation.

29. The representative of **Sweden** said that the report was well written but lacked an analysis of needs and impact. He appreciated the fact that the secretariat was already taking measures to implement the recommendations. The ambitious objectives of the TRAINFORTRADE programme had not been matched by its

results, and the credibility of the programme had suffered as a consequence. There were shortcomings in the management of the programme, there were questions about its sustainability, and internal coordination was not adequate. He noted with concern that no previous external evaluation of the programme had taken place and agreed that more frequent evaluations were needed. He also asked whether TRAINFORTRADE might not be better handled by ITC. He considered it important to follow up the evaluation, taking into account the report's recommendations and the outcome of the Working Party's session, and assumed that the UNCTAD secretariat would now work out a revised programme strategy accordingly.

30. The representative of **France** expressed appreciation for the quality of the report and for the fact that the secretariat was already taking measures to implement the recommendations. However, his delegation regretted that it had not been consulted during the evaluation. While recognizing that the consultant had faced a significant time constraint, a more accurate picture could have been presented and, furthermore, the needs analysis of beneficiary countries could have been based more on factual findings. He supported the idea of more frequent evaluations of this type. The solutions provided in the report could also be applied to other technical cooperation programmes.

31. The representative of **Tunisia** said she appreciated the quality of the report and the fact that the secretariat had hired an independent consultant for the exercise. Her country's experience with the programme had been successful. The interest in the programme was shown by a recent UNDP meeting on technical cooperation for Arab States, where TRAINFORTRADE had been considered a priority. She welcomed the measures taken by the secretariat to redeploy the TRAINFORTRADE programme to the Division on Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency.

Informal meetings

32. The Working Party pursued its consideration of agenda item 4 in informal meetings.

Action by the Working Party

33. At the closing plenary meeting of the second part of its session (123rd plenary meeting), on 8 December 1997, the Working Party adopted agreed conclusions. (For the text of the agreed conclusions, see annex II.)

Chapter III

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

34. The thirtieth session of the Working Party was opened on 6 October 1997 by Mr. Alejandro Rogers (Chile), Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur of the Working Party at its twenty-ninth session.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

35. At its 120th (opening) plenary meeting, on 6 October 1997, the Working Party elected Mr. Behzad Alipour (Islamic Republic of Iran) as its Chairman and Mr. Petko Baev (Bulgaria) as its Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

36. Also at its 120th plenary meeting, the Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its thirtieth session (TD/B/WP/102). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
4. Evaluation of technical cooperation programmes:
   (a) In-depth study on TRAINFORTRADE
   (b) In-depth study on DMFAS */
5. Provisional agenda for the thirty-first session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

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*/ At the first part of the session, the representative of the UNCTAD secretariat announced that the study on DMFAS, which the secretariat had suggested and for which the Swiss Government had made funds available, would not be completed in time for the Working party's session. Delegations would be consulted on how to proceed.

D. Provisional agenda for the thirty-first session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 5)

37. At the closing plenary meeting of the second part of its thirtieth session, (123rd plenary meeting), on 8 December 1997, the Working Party decided that the provisional agenda for its thirty-first session would be developed within the framework of the regular consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board.

E. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 7)

38. At the same meeting, the Working Party authorized the Rapporteur to finalize its report after the close of the session.

ANNEXES

Annex I

AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY AT THE FIRST PART OF ITS THIRTIETH SESSION

1. The Working Party reviewed the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD (TD/B/44/11 and Add.1 and 2). It recalled that, in June 1997, the Board had adopted UNCTAD's Technical Cooperation Strategy and that, in March 1997, the Board had taken note of the first three-year plan (1997-1999) for technical cooperation prepared by the secretariat.

2. The Working Party considered a number of general issues concerning the technical cooperation programme as a whole, including recent developments and future prospects regarding the mobilization of resources from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and bilateral and other multilateral sources, the distribution of activities among countries, regions and programmes, cooperation between UNCTAD and other organizations as regards operational activities, and proposals regarding financial self-sustainability and cost recovery in certain UNCTAD technical cooperation programmes.

3. The Working Party noted that in Africa, the value of regional projects exceeded that of national projects and expressed the hope that activities in that region should increasingly be undertaken at the country level. It also noted that the relative share of technical cooperation expenditures in the Asian region and in the Latin American and Caribbean region had diminished significantly over the past three years.

4. The Working Party conducted a programme-by-programme review of activities undertaken in 1996, and exchanged views on individual programmes with the responsible secretariat officials.

5. The Working Party was of the view that, in order to achieve improved cost-effectiveness and outputs, some priorities should be set among the numerous technical cooperation programmes and projects of UNCTAD. The Working Party recommended that a good occasion to make progress in this area would be in the context of the preparation of the three-year rolling technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000. In this respect, it was suggested that the Working Party could review the plan prior to its submission to the Board.

6. On the basis of its review, the Working Party recommends the following draft decision to the Trade and Development Board for consideration under agenda item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session:

Draft decision

"The Trade and Development Board,

1. Takes notes of the report on technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing and the complementary statistical information submitted by the secretariat (TD/B/44/11 and Add.1 and 2);

2. Notes with encouragement the increase in the level of UNCTAD's technical cooperation expenditure in 1996 and that projected for 1997;

3. Reaffirms the principle that technical cooperation should be non-conditional and that it should be demand-driven;

4. Expresses its appreciation to bilateral and multilateral donors for their contributions to UNCTAD's technical cooperation programmes, and appeals to them to extend their contributions in line with UNCTAD's Technical Cooperation Strategy and plan;

5. Requests the secretariat to explore ways and means of increasing the predictability of funding for the technical cooperation programme of UNCTAD;

6. Encourages the secretariat to continue its efforts to deepen its cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a view, *inter alia*, to increasing the level of funding and other support from UNDP for UNCTAD programmes;

7. Takes note of the proposals of the secretariat on the question of partial cost recovery with a view to contributing to the financial self-sustainability of selected programmes, and requests the secretariat to report on the legal implications of those proposals and to provide the thirty-second session of the Working Party on technical cooperation with details of alternative cost-recovery options which might be applied, as well as the possibility of special arrangements for least developed countries (LDCs);

8. Notes the fact that the Working Party agreed on the need for greater transparency in respect of activities funded from the regular budget and those funded from extra-budgetary resources;

9. Notes the progress made by UNCTAD in its cooperation with other organizations, and requests the secretariat to pursue its efforts to intensify such cooperation, including with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO);

10. Encourages the secretariat to continue to deepen its cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) with a view, *inter alia*, to better coordinating technical cooperation in several areas, including support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

11. Requests the secretariat to prepare, in consultation with member States, a handbook whose objective would be to assist possible beneficiaries of UNCTAD's technical cooperation;

12. Requests the secretariat, in consultation with member States, to explore new modalities which would ensure a better relative balance in the share of technical cooperation expenditure of the various regions, taking into account their respective needs;

13. Decides to consider an in-depth evaluation of the Global Trade Point Network at the thirty-second session of the Working Party in 1998 dealing with technical cooperation;

14. Requests the secretariat to prepare the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000 for consideration by the Working Party at the second part of its thirtieth session in December 1997 and thereafter by the Trade and Development Board at its first executive session in 1998, with a view to rationalizing the technical cooperation plan;

15. Requests the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to include, in his next report on technical cooperation through the Working Party on the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme Budget to the Trade and Development Board information on:

- The implementation of the UNCTAD Technical Cooperation Strategy;

- The implementation of technical cooperation programmes in line with the areas of activity established in paragraph 97 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" to enable the Working Party to contribute to the mid-term review by the Trade and Development Board of the outcome of UNCTAD IX;

- The cost-effectiveness of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD; and

- The establishment of quality control and standards at the project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages."

Annex II

AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY AT THE SECOND PART OF ITS THIRTIETH SESSION

I

The Working Party,

Notes the 1998-2000 plan for technical cooperation prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat, as contained in document TD/B/WP/104;

Decides to transmit the plan to the Trade and Development Board, account being taken of the comments expressed by the Working Party.

II

Having considered the evaluation report on the TRAINFORTRADE Programme, as contained in document TD/B/WP/103,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the evaluation report;

2. Reaffirms the importance it attaches to human resources development and to UNCTAD's role in this respect, in accordance with the Midrand Declaration, and invites the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to pursue his efforts to reinforce these activities;

3. Recognizes the expertise and the comparative advantage of UNCTAD in this area;

4. Welcomes the measures being taken by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to strengthen the TRAINFORTRADE Programme and invites him to take into consideration in this process the conclusions and recommendations contained in the evaluation report and to submit a progress report to the Working Party in 1998;

5. Further welcomes the statement made by the secretariat concerning the increase in the resources to be allocated to the Programme, including regular budget resources;

6. Invites donor Governments and institutions to increase their contribution to the Programme;

7. Stresses the importance of:

Accurate needs assessment;

The improved sustainability of the Programme at national, subregional and regional levels;

Proper selection of national institutions, through consultations, in the design and implementation of specific projects, taking into account the offers made by some institutions in this regard;

8. Notes with appreciation the results achieved so far by the Programme and urges the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to enhance the implementation of the projects, including with respect to their follow-up and management;

9. Welcomes the measures being taken by the secretariat in using information technologies within TRAINFORTRADE, which should maximize the geographical reach of the Programme;

10. Recognizes the desirability of moving towards the creation of generally acceptable diplomas, once the basic preconditions are met, in particular in terms of internal quality control;

11. Stresses the need for regular monitoring of the Programme, as well as for its evaluation at shorter intervals;

12. Emphasizes the need for regular consultations among donors, beneficiaries and the secretariat on TRAINFORTRADE;

13. Takes note with appreciation of the enhanced cooperation between UNCTAD and other organizations, in particular ITC and WTO, in the implementation of the TRAINFORTRADE Programme and encourages the secretariat to continue and increase its efforts in this direction in order to promote coherence and complementarity;

14. Notes the very useful format of this type of evaluation and encourages the secretariat to use it in future.

Annex III

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY OF THE WORKING PARTY'S INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON THE ROLLING THREE-YEAR TECHNICAL COOPERATION PLAN

1. The Working Party reviewed the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000 on the basis of the report contained in TD/B/WP/104. It recalled that, at the first part of its thirtieth session, the Working Party had requested the secretariat to prepare the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000 for consideration by the Working Party at the second part of its thirtieth session and thereafter by the Trade and Development Board at its first executive session in 1998 with a view to rationalizing the technical cooperation plan (decision 444 (XLIV)).

2. The Working Party requested the secretariat to transmit to the next executive session of the Board the rolling three-year plan on technical cooperation for UNCTAD for 1998-2000, taking into account comments summarized below.

3. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for a very useful document containing a clear presentation of the plan and giving an overall indication of UNCTAD's present and future technical cooperation activities. It noted that the Plan responded to the call for greater transparency in UNCTAD is technical cooperation activities.

4. The Working Party noted the need for a resource mobilization strategy which would allow greater predictability of future activities and a more balanced distribution of activities among regions.

5. The Working Party expressed concern at the important disparity existing between the figures indicated under the "approved" and "proposed" columns. It noted in this respect that this disparity gave the negative impression that UNCTAD was faced with a huge funding problem.

6. The Working Party expressed the view that, in order to improve the presentation of the plan, the column indicating proposed projects should distinguish between those projects which had already reached an advanced stage of discussion among the beneficiaries, the donors and the UNCTAD secretariat and those which were only at a preliminary stage of discussion. It was also suggested that a distinction should be made between approved projects/proposals included in the plan for the first time and those listed in the first rolling plan for the period 1997-1999 (TD/B/EX(14)/3/Add.1). Finally, the Working Party suggested that the plan should indicate those activities undertaken on the basis of a specific request from one or more beneficiary countries.

7. The Working Party noted that the plan did not include activities to be carried out by UNCTAD in follow-up to the integrated framework launched at the High-level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for LDCs' Trade Development. In this regard, the Working Party was of the view that some indication of UNCTAD's share in the implementation of the framework should be provided.

8. A number of participants expressed the view that the reading of the plan would be improved if data were supplied on approved and proposed projects on a yearly basis. In this respect the secretariat noted that data could be given on a yearly basis, but due to inevitable uncertainties, data for the first year

would be relatively close to reality, while those for subsequent years would be difficult to foresee.

9. Some members of the Working Party expressed concern at the relative shares of expenditures of the different regions and in particular noted with concern that activities in the Asian region and the Latin American and Caribbean region had diminished significantly. It was noted that the plan proposed a more balanced distribution of UNCTAD technical cooperation activities for 1998-2000 among the regions, contingent on the mobilization of the necessary resources.

Annex IV

ATTENDANCE *

1. The following States members of UNCTAD, members of the Working Party, were represented at the session:

Argentina 1/
Australia 2/
Bulgaria
Chile
China
Ethiopia 2/
France
Germany
Iran, Islamic Republic of 1/
Japan
Mexico
Morocco
Norway
Philippines
Poland
Russian Federation
South Africa
Sri Lanka
United States of America

2. The following other States members of UNCTAD, not members of the Working Party, were represented as observers at the session:

Austria 2/
Bangladesh 1/
Belarus
Brazil 2/
Costa Rica 1/
Cuba 2/
Czech Republic 1/
Ecuador
India 1/
Ireland
Israel 1/
Italy
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Mauritius 1/
Myanmar 2/
Netherlands 1/
Portugal
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland 1/
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Yemen
Zambia 1/

3. The Economic Commission for Europe 1/ was represented at the session.

4. The following intergovernmental organization participated at the session:

Organization of African Unity 1/

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*/ For list of participants, see TD/B/WP/INF.36.

1/ First part of the session only.

2/ Second part of the session only.

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